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DE RUEHNT #0500 0741111
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 151111Z MAR 06
FM AMEMBASSY TASHKENT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5338
INFO RUEHTA/AMEMBASSY ALMATY 7702
RUEHAH/AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT 1806
RUEHEK/AMEMBASSY BISHKEK 2330
RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE 2226
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 1330
RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA 0001

C O N F I D E N T I A L TASHKENT 000500

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DEPT FOR SCA/CEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/14/2016

TAGS: [CU](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [UZ](#) [ZK](#)

SUBJECT: A SURPRISING RECIPE: PLOV WITH CUBAN RICE

Classified By: CLASSIFIED BY DCM BRAD HANSON FOR REASONS 1.4 (B, D).

¶1. (C) The Uzbek Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) refuses to confirm reports that a Cuban delegation, headed by Deputy FM Eumelio Caballero, visited Tashkent March 13 to establish diplomatic relations with Uzbekistan. The delegation's visit was reported by Cuba-based Prensa Latina, the National News Agency of Cuba, and the Vietnamese News Agency in Havana. So far there has been no local press coverage of the visit.

¶2. (C) Comment: MFA's refusal to discuss this event with Post is particularly laughable. Only a handful of employees work at the America,s Desk, and the same officials who were "unable" to give us any information were likely involved with the Cuban delegation's visit. This episode is yet another example of how far the bilateral relationship has fallen even on the most routine of diplomatic matters. The establishment of diplomatic relations with Cuba appears a purely political move by Uzbekistan, as the geographical distance and state of both countries, economies make profitable economic ties nearly impossible.
PURNELL